(3-62) Expires 10-31-87 **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service For NPS use only **National Register of Historic Places** received Inventory-Nomination Form date entered See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections 1 Name historic The Blackstone Hotel, (Sheraton-Blackstone 1950-71) and or common The Blackstone Hotel Location NA not for publication street & number 80 East 8albo Drive (636 South Michigan Avenue) N/A vicinity of city, town Chicago code ()31 state Illinois code 012 county Cook Classification 3. **Present Use** Ownership Status Category \_\_ public egriculture museum dietrict \_X\_ occupied X\_privete unoccupied X commercial park X building(&) educational privata rasidence both work in progress \_\_structure enterteinment religious Public Acquisition Accessible site yes: restricted government eclentific in process object being considered industriai traneportation X\_ yee: unrestricted military other: no 4. **Owner of Property** American National Bank Land Trust #63970 name street & number 33 North LaSalle Street NA vicinity of etete city, town Chicago Illinois Location of Legal Description 5. courthouse, regietry of deeds, etc. Registrar & Recorder of Cook County 118 North Clark Street street & number Illinois 60602 Chicago state city, town **Representation in Existing Surveys** 6. South Michigan Ave./Grant Park District Survey hes this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_yee \_\_\_\_ no title Illinois Historic Structures Survey federsi <u>X</u> state <u>county</u> iocei dete 1985 1974 Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Commission on Chicago Historical Architectural depository for survey records Landmarks Chicago Illinois state Springfield city, town

Washington NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

# 7. Description

Condition      excellent    deteriorated      good    ruins      feir    unexposed	Check one unaltered altered	Check one _X_ original site moved date
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### 7.1 Physical Description

The Blackstone Hotel was designed by Benjamin H. Marshall of Marshall & Fox Architects in 1909. It is a 22-story rectangular structure designed in the nineteenth-century Second Empire style which Marshall copied afer a trip to Paris. It is located on the corner of South Michigan Avenue and East Balbo Drive. It has a structural steel frame encased in tile and plaster fireproofing supported on rock caissons. The exterior facade on the east and south have a one-story base of pink granite topped by four stories of high quality white glazed terra cotta. The second and third floor exterior walls are punctuated by large windows which originally brought light into the lobby, restaurants, and ballroom. Half of these windows have been blanked out for a theater. A 12-story shaft of red brick with white terra cotta window surrounds constitutes the main bulk of the building. This is topped by an elaborate belt course of terra cotta, followed by two stories of terra cotta and brick. On top of this, the original structure supported a large intermediate terra cotta cornice topped by a cast iron railing. This has been removed and replaced with red brick and white glazed brick, which are flush with the rest of the building. The last three quest floors are transition zones of elaborate terra cotta and brick and form the base of the three-story mansard roof. The mansard roof exterior was originally constructed of red tile perforated by oculus windows. It was topped by a balustraded parapet of iron medallions and iron light poles. The elaborate medallioned parapet and light poles have been removed, presumably by Sheraton, and replaced with a 4-foot parapet wall of red brick with a limestone cap. The red tile mansard roofing is now vertically battened lead, with horizontally crimped seams. The oculus windows remain in place on the east and south facades, but their decoration has been removed. They have been removed on the west facade. Terra cotta medallions and urns have been removed from the elaborate terra cotta dormers in the mansard roof area, but the remaining details have not changed. The west (alley) facade does not have an elaborate base and has a fire escape added at the west; otherwise it is the same as the east.

The north facade is brick and terra cotta with the rooms above the adjoining l4-story building having windows similar to the east facade. The four main passenger elevators are located in a central bank, inset from the north facade. The west third of this facade contains service elevators and the boiler stack and kitchen exhaust.

The plan of the building is rectangular. The east side is 80 feet 5 inches and the south is 173 feet. The entire envelope is filled on the lower floors. The guest room floors and the roof are slightly U-shaped, as the north facade is indented to provide a court for the west room windows.

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The main elevator shaft is located in the center of the court.

The interior contains three subbasements. The lowest, or sub-subbasement, originally was connected to the underground tunnel system which removed trash and cinders from Loop buildings; this system has been abandoned.

The subbasement is very elaborate. It is two stories high around the boiler and engine room. The floor has  $l" \times l"$  white mosaic tile with decorative borders, and many of the columns are encased in brick. Much of the original machinery has been removed. The east end contains a secured storage area for liquor and coolers and freezers for food.

The basement contains a barber shop, checkrooms, and locker facilities for employees. Offices and storage are now located there.

The next five floors contain the public functions of the hotel.

The first, or club, floor contains a direct entrance to Michigan Avenue. Shops were originally installed on both sides of the entrance, but a coffee shop and lounge have been more recently installed. The rear area contains meeting rooms because a fire destroyed the interior of the former Blackstone Grill.

The second floor, or lobby floor, is entered directly off Balbo Drive. Two levels of steps are interrupted by a vestibule of cast iron and terra cotta construction which is original.

The lobby walls and columns are richly appointed with walnut, and the plaster ceiling coffers and beams are formed with elaborate plaster decoration. The former orangerie is now a nightclub, Jazz Showcase. The main desk wraps discreetly around the rear of the elevator shafts, and the original balustraded stairs leading to the restaurant are intact. The restaurant, located on the east, is now the Mayfair Theater and is the only room in the public area that has been completely altered. In the 1950s the Sheraton Hotel chain decked over the third level floor that stepped down to a dance floor, added new plaster decoration to the walls and ceiling and relocated the chandeliers to the main lobby. The exterior windows on the east and south have been temporarily blocked and dark curtains adorn the exterior walls of the theater at present. The play, "Shear Madness," has had a five-year engagement here and is still popular.

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The third level contains the upper portion of the restaurant on the east. The remainder of the floor is the hotel kitchen and bakery.

The fourth level contains the ballroom, located directly over the restaurant, an elaborate reception hall with adjoining parlors, and a large service area on the west.

The fifth level contains the upper part of the ballroom; the ballroom balcony is entered from this area. The long Art Hall, with a number of private dining rooms, is located on this floor, along with an additional service area. The English Room, located on the south and west, has an elaborate ceiling and is intact.

Above this public area are located 16 floors of guest rooms, the first floor actually being the sixth level. The rooms are organized in a U-shaped form, each having an exterior window for light and ventilation. Toilet rooms are located on the exterior walls, each with its own window. This has led to an interesting fenestration on the facade. The second guest floor contains the Governor's Suite in the southeast corner.

The fifth guest floor contains the Presidential Suite, which occupies the entire south facade of the building. An interior corridor connects all the rooms, and it is reported to be a favorite of the Secret Service.

- 7.2 Integrity
  - 7.2.1 Exterior While some cosmetic alterations have been made to the roof, the south entrance canopy, cornice, and the banquet hall windows on the east and south facades, the remaining exterior is in original condition. The red brick and white glazed terra cotta are very high quality, and although some terra cotta window surrounds have been replaced with white glazed brick, the repair is not very apparent on the exterior. The terra cotta on the lower floors is being cleaned and looks new.
  - 7.2.2 Interior With the exception of the fire-destroyed Blackstone Grill and the dining room, the interior finishes are intact. The original woodwork of the lobby is well maintained, with the original electric wall sconces intact. The chandeliers from the lobby have been removed and crystal chandeliers that appear to have originally hung in the dining room have been reinstalled here. The original orangerie, now

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Jazz Showcase, appears to have been cosmetically altered, and the entrance from the lobby switched one bay. The remaining public floors and ballroom are intact, even to the light fixtures. None of the doors, walls, or festooning plaster ornament have been disturbed. The guest rooms are in original condition, with some of the original hotel furniture left intact. The Presidential Suite contains exquisite French Provincial furniture and crystal chandeliers.

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All woodwork, doors, and moldings appear to be as originally installed.

The "back-of-the-house" areas from the basements through the penthouse levels have changed very little. Some obsolete mechanical equipment has been removed. The original kitchen exhaust fan is still functioning.

# 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 X 1900-	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture agriculture architecture art commerce communications	<ul> <li>_ community planning</li> <li>_ conservation</li> <li>_ economics</li> </ul>	Iandscape architectur         Iaw         Iterature         Initary         music         philosophy         X_politics/government	ereligion science sculpture social/ humsnitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Spacific detes	1910 - 1936	Builder/Architect Ma	rshall & Fox	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### 8.1 Significance

The Blackstone Hotel meets three criteria of significance for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. They are architecture, social/humanitarian and politics/government.

#### Architecture

The Blackstone has been Chicago's premier hotel statement since its construction in 1910. Influenced by Parisian and east coast hotels of the period, it combined Benjamin H. Marshall's originality with the Drakes' knowledge of hotels to achieve a significance of design that continues to this day. In 1910, it was awarded the Gold Medal of the Illinois Chapter, American Institute of Architects.

Marshall began his career with architect B.H. Wilson, under whose guidance he learned the disciplines of planning and practical construction. He became a full partner in the firm at age 21. In 1902, he went into practice for himself, where he continued until 1905. During this time he designed the Iroquois Theatre, which in 1925 was destroyed in a disastrous fire. He formed a partnership with Charles E. Fox in 1905. It was during these partnership years that he designed his most significant buildings, beginning with the Blackstone.

Marshall was retained by the Drake brothers to design the Blackstone in 1909. He chose a Second Empire style to give the hotel a rich and lavish appearance. He had a unique gift in understanding interior space and how to embellish its appearance. This was coupled with the Drakes' insistence that the hotel contain many properties which included a unique plan which put bathrooms and direct ventilation on the exterior wall and an innovative mechanical system which provided air conditioning and ice water.

The Blackstone is considered a major landmark on South Michigan Avenue, fronting Grant Park.

The LaSalle Hotel, of the same period, designed by Holabird and Roche, was a good hotel by 1910 standards, and although similar in style, it never achieved the notoriety or set the style as did the Blackstone.

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The Blackstone's success resulted in many other commissions for Marshall in Chicago, most of them at exclusive addresses on Chicago's North Side. He designed 999 North Lake Shore Drive Apartments in 1912 followed by the South Shore Country Club 1914, and The Edgewater Beach Hotel (demolished). In 1918 he designed 1550 North State Parkway and in 1919 the Drakes retained him to build The Drake Hotel, which today remains the symbol of North Michigan Avenue. All these aforementioned buildings are either individually listed or are significant in National Register or Chicago Landmark Districts.

#### Social/Humanitarian

The Blackstone Hotel opened a new chapter in Chicago's history. The Drakes learned the hotel business from their father, who operated the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago. They desired to establish a new facility that would attract Chicagoans. The Blackstone was so well organized and had such great appeal that for the first time a hotel became a place for prominent Chicagoans to congregate. It was not merely a place for traveling businessmen to stay. Elegant balls and parties were commissioned there by well-to-do people until very recently.

Marshall became the great social architect of the age in Chicago and was, indeed, the embodiment of the "Roaring Twenties." His flamboyant figure was often seen in custom designed white Packards in the company of chorus girls. He entertained the Prince of Wales at his studio in Wilmette.

#### Politics

Preferred because of its location and Presidential Suite, the Blackstone has been host to every president from Theodore Roosevelt through Richard Nixon. Its Governor's Suite is the home of the "smoke-filled room" where, in 1920, a deal was cut among Republicans to nominate Warren G. Harding for president. In 1940, Harry Hopkins called Franklin D. Roosevelt from the suite to inform him that he had been nominated for a third term as president.

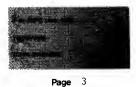
The Blackstone has been the hub of every national political convention held in Chicago by either party. Candidates running for national office and incumbents continue to stay there.

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8.2 History

The Drake Hotel Company was organized after the turn of the century by two brothers, Tracy C. and John B. Drake. In 1910, they built the Blackstone Hotel at 7th and South Michigan Avenues for \$3,000,000. It was named after Timothy Blackstone, chairman of the Chicago and Alton Railway and a Drake family friend, whose home had stood on the site. Its proximity to railroad stations made it a great success, and its opulence and design attracted travelers and Chicagoans of the upper class. As a curious example of the hotel's importance, Enrico Caruso sang at the grand opening of the hotel. This coincided with the "theft" of Caruso from New York for the fledgling Chicago Opera Company. A great hue and cry was raised in the Eastern press surrounding this affair.

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The Drake Hotel Company mortaged the hotel property to expand elsewhere, but with the advent of the depression it fell on hard times and they lost the hotel to Metropolitan Life, holder of the mortgage, in 1932.

Metropolitan Life hired managers to run the hotel and in 1936 leased the property to A. S. Kirkeby, Inc., which became the operating company. In 1941, Kirkeby and others formed Blackstone Hotel, Inc. and purchased the property.

In 1954, the Sheraton Hotel chain purchased the hotel from the Kirkeby chain in a complex trade of stock and property. Sheraton did some remodeling in the restaurant but ultimately sold the property to a group of Chicago investors in 1971.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached reference sheet.

E	10. Ge	ograp	hical l	Data						
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As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the Netional Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 85 665), i hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify thet it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth-by the National Park Service. State Hietoric Preservation Officer signature Markay Control Park Service. State Hietoric Preservation Agency date 3/18/86 For NPS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Keeper of the National Register Attest: date	The evaluated s	significance o	f this property	within the	state Is:					
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NPS-Form 10-900-8 (3-82) 0MB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

## United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet The Blackstone Hotel Item number 9

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Page 1

- 9.1 References
  - American Architect 104 (31 December 1913) 7 unnumbered plates following page 284.
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**United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

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Item number g Continuation sheet The Blackstone Hotel

Illinois Society of Architects Monthly Bulletin 29 (August-September 1944) 8.

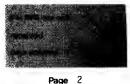
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### United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet	The Blackstone Hotel	Item number ]	10
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- The nominated property occupies parcel No. 9 in the 600 block of South Michigan Avenue and is approximately 80.5 ft. x 173 ft. in size.
- 3. Beginning at the intersection of the sidewalks on the northwest corner of East Balbo Drive and South Michigan Avenue, proceed north along South Michigan Avenue at an angle of 90° 42' 20" for 80.39 ft. Then turn west along the building at an angle of 89° 18' 27" for 173.03 ft. to the alley. Then proceed south along the alley at an angle of 90° 42' 51" for 80.43' to the intersection of the alley and East Balbo Drive. Turn east at an angle of 89° 16' 22" and proceed 173.06' to the point of origin.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SER VICE P.O. BOX 37127 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO

## MAY 1 6 1986

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning May 4, 1986 and ending May 10, 1986. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

ALABAMA, <u>Choctaw County</u>, Mount Sterling, <u>Mount Sterling Methodist Church</u>, Near jct. of CR 43 and CR 27 (05/08/86) ALABAMA, <u>Colbert County</u>, Leighton, <u>Preuit Oaks</u>, Cotton Town Rd. (05/08/86) ALABAMA, <u>DeKalb County</u>, Fort Payne, <u>Alabama Builders' Hardware Manufacturing Company</u>, 204 Eighth St. NE (05/08/86) ALABAMA, <u>Etowah County</u>, Gadsden, <u>Hood</u>, <u>Colonel O. R., House</u>, 862 Chestnut St. (05/08/86) ALABAMA, <u>Marshall County</u>, Arab, <u>Hotel Thompson</u>, 104 First Ave. NE (05/08/86)

CALIFORNIA, San Francisco County, San Francisco, Ship KING PHILIP-Schooner REPORTER (Shipwreck Site), Foot of Ortega St. (05/08/86)

DELAWARE, <u>New Castle County</u>, Townsend, <u>Townsend Historic District</u>, Roughly bounded by Taylor, Main, Commerce, Lattiamus, South, Ginn, and Walnut Sts., Railroad Ave., and Cannery Ln. (05/08/86)

GEORGIA, <u>Stewart County</u>, Richland, <u>Richland Historic District</u>, Roughly bounded by Ponder and Harmony Sts., GA 27 and Broad St. (05/05/86)

ILLINOIS, <u>Cook County</u>, Chicago, <u>Blackstone Hotel</u>, 80 E. Balbo Dr. (05/08/86) ILLINOIS, <u>Cook County</u>, Chicago, <u>Jeffery--Cyril Historic District</u>, 7146--7148, 7128--7138 Cyril Ave., 7144--7148, 7147, & 7130 S. Jeffery Bivd., and 1966--1974 E. Seventy-first Pl. (05/05/86) ILLINOIS, <u>Cook County</u>, Lemont, <u>Lemont Methodist Episcopal Church</u>, 306 Lemont St. (05/05/86) ILLINOIS, <u>Effingham County</u>, Altamont, <u>Wright, Dr. Charles M., House</u>, 3 W. Jackson St. (05/08/86) ILLINOIS, <u>Jersey County</u>, Jerseyville, <u>Jersey County Courthouse</u>, Public Square (05/08/86) ILLINOIS, <u>Kane County</u>, Aurora, <u>Aurora Watch Factory</u>, 603-621 LaSalle St. (05/08/86) ILLINOIS, <u>Mercer County</u>, Keithsburg, <u>Keithsburg Historic District</u>, Roughly bounded by Third, Jackson, Fifth, and Washington Sts. (05/08/86)

KENTUCKY, Elliott County, Conley-Greene Rockshelter (15EL4) (05/08/86)

LOUISIANA, Terrebonne Parish, Gibson, Gibson Methodist Episcopal Church, S. Bayou Black Dr. (05/03/86)

MAINE, <u>Aroostock County</u>, Presque Isle, <u>U.S. Post Office-Presque Isle Main</u>, 23 Second St. (05/09/86) MAINE, <u>Cumberland County</u>, Portland, <u>U.S. Post Office-Portland Main</u>, 125 Forest Ave. (05/09/86)

MARYLAND, Howard County, Ellicott City vicinity, Enniscorthy, 3412 Folly Quarter Rd. (05/08/86)

MASSACHUSETTS, <u>Hampshire County</u>, Ware, <u>Ware Center Historic District</u>, MA 9 and Greenwich Plains Rd. (05/08/86)